Statement regarding: Aircraft EC135 sn 0013

EC135 sn0013 N911KB was placed undergoing a series of inspections and maintenance and was substantially damaged during a post maintenance check flight. The facts as I am aware and my personal involvement include the following:

- The aircraft was undergoing a 50hr check, module 1 check (100hr), module 2 check (400hr), module 3 check (800hr), and a variety of "area inspections" as defined by Metro Aviation's EC135 AAIP, and a scheduled engine change.
- A work order was opened to complete the inspection and maintenance and was being completed by personnel from the repair station and personnel assigned to work in the Tyler Texas bases. The personnel from the Tyler Texas bases were personnel who had worked at the repair station on other projects similar to this one.
- The scope of work had originally been slated for a four to six week work schedule, but demand by the using customer dictated that the scope of work be shortened to the minimum time needed to complete only the inspections and any repair as needed to ensure airworthiness of the aircraft. They (the using customer) had requested that this work be completed in 5 days or sooner if possible. I explained this was not possible due to personnel availability, and depth of inspection requirement.
- Defects discovered during the inspection included: Main Rotor Blades that required extensive servicing, replacement of Z bolt bearings, leading edge erosion protection replacement, and paint surface touch-up. The tail rotor control cable was found needing replacement due to problems with the outer shielding. One Hydraulic control line was found to be leaking at a swedged fitting and required replacement. All three of these defects required parts and were projecting additional delay in delivery of the aircraft back to the using customer.
- Personnel from the Tyler Texas bases were un-available on a continuous daily basis and I was unsure daily whom I had available to complete the inspections and repairs to this aircraft. On many days I had no personnel from the Tyler Texas bases to help and this created a situation where repair station personnel were bouncing back and forth between aircraft undergoing other maintenance activities helping those personnel who were working on this aircraft. This was not ideal and made job continuity difficult.
- I tried to ensure I observed as much as possible what was going on with this aircraft to ensure progress was not stalled due to unforeseen problems, and would quiz personnel working on the aircraft as to what they were doing, gauging their technical understanding of the task being completed and generally trying to stay on top of the pulse of the job completion. I did observe one of the Tyler Texas technicians with the pilot pedal shaft assemblies in his hands shortly after removal performing the required inspection. I quizzed him to ensure he understood the inspection requirement on the pilot pedal shaft and support. He gave me enough information to make me believe he did in fact understand the inspection requirements.

- The aircraft then was hovered for track and balance measurements and MSM tests.
- After the first flight I observed the track and balance readings and found that they were probably satisfactory for forward flight but I felt that more progress could be made by one more adjustment prior to forward flight, and asked for the engine power check record so I could check to ensure the newly installed engine was making acceptable power. I also scanned through the work order one more time to ensure any open items on the inspection sheets and work order discrepancy sheets would not affect safe operation of the aircraft.
- I then went into the hangar and heard the aircraft start. As the chief inspector was here I wanted to discuss something with him in his office. As we were having our discussion I heard the aircraft hovering, then I heard a loud bang or pop sound, approx 2 to 3 seconds later I heard the aircraft hit the ground and the sound of main rotor blades chewing into the ground.
- After personnel had been sent to the hospital, and after the arrival of Milton, Milton, myself and several others made a quick examination of the aircraft and noted that the contents of the pilot seat area; flight computer, check list, work order, flight manual, and other items were on the ground in front of the aircraft. Additionally we noted that the pilot tail rotor control pedals were on the ground. One was located directly in front of the nose and the other was approx 5 to 10 feet to the right of the nose area. We also noted no rotational damage to the fennestron fan blades, or rotational plane, and that the tail rotor drive shaft was severed in several locations with several pieces missing from the immediate wreckage. Milton asked me what work had been done and why the pedals would be out of the wreckage. I explained to him that one of the inspection items was inspection of the pedal and support shaft and that the pedals would have required removal, and that I had no idea why they would be out of the aircraft. He asked where the bolts were that secure the pedals and I told him I did not know and he said we should go look for them. After approximately ten minutes of looking in the hangar around the area where the maintenance had been preformed we found a small parts bag tied to the tail rotor control cable that had been replaced. Inside the small bag was some hardware, including two bolts that looked similar to the bolts that would have been used to secure the pedals. We put everything back where we found them and went back out to the wreckage to assist with other issues.

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